Tidings

Meet CUPS

Come join CUPS at its General Meetings. Come out and contribute or just listen.

Next meeting:

Time:
Friday, March 29th at 7:00pm

Place:
Campus Ministry (Room Z-105)
2090 Mackay (downtown campus)
Please call (514) 848-7441 for info.

We will be discussing up-coming events, the possibility of up-coming ritual, and generally how to make this CUPS' best year to date!

Editorial

Greetings to all our faithful readers! I'm terribly sorry for the long wait between issues, but we're back with a new sense of purpose. How appropriate that this was done just in time for the March/Ostara issue of this newsletter.

As you may or may not have noticed, the format for *Tidings* has been updated yet again. Certain sections have been removed (at least for this issue) and the *Daze* column has re-incarnated as an actual calendar that you can hang up on your wall.

All this changes (and any future ones) are done in the hopes of serving the needs of the community. Should you have any comments or suggestions, feel free to contact us.

Until next time. Blessed Be.

How to Reach Us

At Our Office
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Office Hours
Every Thursday 6:00pm – 9:00pm
(Or by appointment)

By Phone
(514) 848-7441 Leave a message

By E-Mail / Internet
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About Tidings

Tidings is a free newsletter published by the Concordia University Pagan Society (CUPS) on the last week of each month.

Announcements of interest to the Pagan community will be printed free of charge.

Submissions for upcoming issues may be made by e-mail to cups@fastmail.ca, in TEXT format, or to our postal address. Bear in mind that our publication is black & white.

Deadline for any submissions is 7 days before our monthly General Meeting.

Holiday Lore & Traditions

Celebrated on the Spring Equinox, Ostara (OST-a-RAh) is a time of renewed life and balance. As Spring reaches its midpoint, night and day stand in perfect balance, with light on the increase. This is one of the two Sabbats when the young (adolescent) Sun God celebrates a hierogamy (sacred marriage) with the young Maiden Goddess, who conceives (many folk celebrate this union at Beltane instead, but as the Ostara Sabbat occurs 9 months prior to Yule - when the pregnant Goddess gives birth to the God - it can also be celebrated here, depending upon your own preference & what you have been taught!). In nine months, she will again become the Great Mother. It is a time of great fertility, new growth, and newborn animals. The God may also be seen here as the newly crowned adolescent Stag King, resplendent in his finery and growing stronger with each day,

The next full moon (a time of increased births) can also be called Ostara & is sacred to Eostre, Saxon Lunar Goddess of fertility (from whence we get the word estrogen), whose two symbols were the egg and the rabbit, both considered fertility symbols.

The Christian religion adopted these emblems for Easter which is celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the vernal equinox. The theme of the conception of the Goddess was adapted as the Feast of the Annunciation, occurring on the alternative fixed calendar date of March 25 Old Lady Day, the earlier date of the equinox. Lady Day may also refer to other goddesses (such as Venus and Aphrodite), many of whom have festivals celebrated at this time.

Ostara Correspondences

Symbolism: Fertility, the return of spring, new growth, balance. God reaching manhood, Goddess reaching womanhood.
Symbols: Eggs, rabbits, spring flowers.
Deities: Eostre, Cerrunnos, the Green Man, the Stag King.
Traditional Foods: Leafy green vegetables, Dairy foods, Nuts such as Pumpkin, Sunflower and Pine. Flower Dishes and Sprouts.
Herbs and Flowers: Daffodil, Jonquils, Woodruff, Violet, Gorse, Olive, Peony, Iris, Narcissus and all spring flowers.
Incense: Jasmine, Rose, Strawberry, Floral of any type.
Sacred Gemstone: Jasper
Special Activities: Planting seeds or starting a Magickal Herb Garden. Dying eggs, having an Egg Hunt!

Pysanky

The egg has long been a symbol of new life and new beginnings in many cultures. The ancient Ukrainians believed the universe was born from a cosmic egg and that each egg symbolizes both the sun & moon, in the golden yolk and nourishing white. People decorated eggs in the spring to welcome back the sun and ensure the fertility & rebirth of all living things. The earliest ceramic pysanky found date to 1300 BCE but the motifs can be traced to the Trypilljan culture of the Ukraine circa 3000 BCE. Ukrainians are very proud that the practice is pre-Christian; today the ancient Pagan symbols exist side-by-side with Christian traditions. People still decorate eggs as gifts for special friends, as protections to put over barn doors or to be buried in fields to convey fertility. Decorating eggs, whether with traditional designs or with personal motifs, can be lots of fun.

A pysanka is created using a wax resist technique somewhat like batik. Pysanka derives from the Ukrainian word pysaty , "to write", and designs are written or drawn on the egg with melted wax. As the egg's placed in a succession of colored dyes from lightest to darkest, wax covers up the lighter parts until the entire egg is done. The wax is then removed and the beautiful polychromatic patterns revealed.

To do pysanky you need a clean and unblemished, room temperature eggs. A solution of water & vinegar should be used to clean the eggs. You need a kystka and a block of beeswax to apply designs and a candle to melt the wax. Holding your kystka in the candle flame will turn the beeswax dark so that your designs show up. It is a good idea to start with a practice egg so that you get a feel for how the wax flows and to give yourself time to build up black wax. Kystky come in several sizes, medium is a reasonable size to start out with. (Look for the modern single wire delrin kystka - the traditional wrapped wires can trap wax which can drip at inopportune times.)

You also need strong, bright dyes. Aniline dyes are good, but because they are chemical rather than vegetable dyes, the dyed eggs cannot be eaten. Mix dyes in wide mouthed jars - remember you have to get an egg on a spoon into them gently. Be sure to protect your working area with newspaper covered in paper towels. (The former protects against spills, the latter will keep newsprint off your eggs.) Have lots of paper towels handy while you work. The oils on your hands may inhibit the shell from taking the dyes so touch the eggs with bare hands as little as possible. I have found dental finger cots to be a wonderful help in keeping my eggs from smudging.

Once you have a basic set up, dyes all mixed and ready, candle, beeswax, kystka and egg now what do you do? Most traditional designs call for dividing the egg into equal sections. Light marks can be made with a pencil, but do not try to erase them as the erased areas won't dye properly. Also be aware that if the pencil marks are in areas that will be left white they may show on the finished egg. Despite these caveats, such marks can be very helpful in charting your design.

Once you have your design in mind begin laying wax on the parts of the egg you wish to remain white. Place the waxed egg in the first color (often yellow) & then wax over the parts to remain yellow. Continue through each color needed ending up in a dark color such as black, navy blue or red. An interesting fact is that green dyes should be applied with q-tips rather than by immersion if only a small area is to be green. Orange dye dissolves most other colors. I mix 2 jars of orange - 1 for dying eggs & 1 for rinsing. You can actually start out in one color group and then wash off a dark dye after waxing, go back to a lighter color and finish with a different color sequence.

To remove the wax from the completed egg, hold it near (but not in) the candle flame until the wax begins to soften and then wipe it clean with a paper towel. Once the wax has been removed the egg can be varnished. Traditionally pysanky eggs are not blown, but many people prefer to blow the finished egg. For unblown eggs it is said that if it survives its first year it will last forever. Some people have reported that at about year three, dogs find the unblown eggs fascinating even though people can't smell anything. It is not practical to use pre-blown eggs for pysanky because they're hard to hold down into the dyes. Also the wax plugs needed to close the holes mean egg colored spots on top and bottom. And if dye should get inside it can drip out at unfortunate times and ruin a completed design, clothes or furniture!

Pysanky portion reprinted from Covenant of the Goddess Newsletter, Vol. 17, Ostara 1992, © 1991 Rowan Fairgrove

March 2002

Saturday ♄	Sunday ☉	Monday ☽	Tuesday ♂	Wednesday ☿	Thursday ♃	Friday ♀
						1 **Matronalia:** Celebrated each year on or around this date in honor of Hera and Juno Lucina, protectors of women, children and the family. Statues of Goddess were decorated with flowers & special fires were lit. Girls made offerings to Juno Lucina at this time of year for happy and prosperous marriages.
2 **Festival of Vesta:** On this Roman festival, the cauldron containing the sacred flame in Vesta's temple was cleaned and the fire rekindled by the Vestal Virgins. **Nineteen Day Fast:** Baha'i Fast to be observed by adult Baha'is in good health - sunrise to sundown – no food or drink.	3	4 **Feast of Rhiannon**: Celebration in honor of Rhiannon, the Celtic/Welsh Mother Goddess originally known as Rigantona (the Great Queen) and is associated with the mare-Goddess Epona. **Anthesteria:** Annual 3 day ritual held to honor Goddesses Flora & Hecate, & souls of the dead (Keres).	5 **Celebration of Isis:** Isis, ruler over safe navigation, boats, fishing & the final journey of life was honored on this date with an annual festival of music, dancing, and feasting. Flowers were floated in rivers & boats blessed with incense in ceremony signifying Isis' opening of the seas to navigation called the Navigum Isidis.	6 **Day of the Lares**: Roman household Gods, the Lares are honoured today. When the family took their meals, some portion was offered to the Lares.	7	8 **Mother Earth Day:** The Chinese honor the birthday of the Earth as a Mother Goddess with this annual festival. Consists of street parades, lighting firecrackers, eating and partying. Coins, Flowers, incense, & paper dolls are placed in small holes in the ground, blessed & covered with soil as birthday presents.
9 **Butter Lamp Festival**: Tibetan Buddhist monks hold annual festival to render demons powerless & secure favor of Gods. Yak-butter sculptures of Buddhist heroes marched through the streets while sacred chants uttered, after which they are tossed into the waters of a river. **Purim**: Celebrates defeat of a plot to destroy the Jews of Persia.	10 **Meatfare Sunday**: Greek Orthodox Christian observance of limiting of food in order to fix attention on the Second Coming of Christ.	11	12 **Day of Marduk**: Marduk (called Jehovah by ancient Hebrews), was sun god who defeated sea goddess Tiamat and claimed creation of the world. Tiamat was cause of Great Flood according to the Babylonians, freeing Marduk from stigma of being a murderer of innocent men, women, and children.	13 **Maha Shivratri:** A Hindu festival in honor of Lord Shiva & his marriage to Goddess Parvati. Ceremonies involving prayers and hymns take place mostly at night. Special foods are not used. **Burgsonndeg**: A fire festival celebrated annually in Luxembourg, with the lighting of great bonfires to welcome rebirth of the Sun & coming of spring.	14 **Vaisakhi:** Hindu solar new year. For Sikhs the day remembers Guru Gobind Singh and founding of the militant fraternity of Sikhs named Kahlsa. Day is observed by temple worship, feasting and dancing. **Diasia**: Date of an annual festival held in Greece to ward off poverty. **Day of Mamurius, the old Mars**: A scapegoat was driven out of the city on this day, symbolic of expelling the old and bringing in the new.	15 **Al Hijra:** Islamic remembrance of migration of Muhammad and followers to Medina in 622 c.e. & establishment of 1st Islamic state. Beginning of the Islamic New Year. No specific religious rituals are observed. **Festival of Attis & Cybele:** 9 day festival celebrates the death/rebirth of the God Attis.
16 **Bacchanalia**: Festival in honor of the wine god Bacchus, banned in 186 BC. The celebrations tended to get wild and out of hand. **Rama Krishna Jayanti**: Hindu celebration of the birthday of Sri Krishna, an incarnation of Lord Krishna. Sweets, fruits and milk products are available in abundance.	17 **St. Patrick's Day**: Catholic feast day honoring Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. The primary symbol of the holiday is the shamrock. **Festival of Astarte**: Held annually in Canaan to honor Goddess known as Queen of Heaven. **Liberalia**: Fertility/Wine God Liber Pater honored yearly in Rome. Time of feasting & drinking, & day when young males entered into manhood. Celebration later included Goddess Libera as a counterpart to the male Liber, represented female/male seed.	18 **Sheelah's Day:** Ancient Irish festival to honor the fertility Goddess known as Sheela-na-gig. **Lent Begins**: Christian 40 day period of preparation for Easter. A time of intense devotion, observed by fasting, frequent worship and acts of charity.	19 **Quintaria:** 5 day Hellenic festival honouring the Goddess Athene was celebrated with athletic events, competitions, and music. Winners were crowned with wreaths of olive branches. **The Martius**: A celebration sacred to Mars. The Salii (priests of Mars) dance and the sacred armour are purified. A ritual in the preparation for military campaigns. It lasts for five days in the Roman tradition.	20 Sun enters astrological sign of Aries. **Spring or Vernal Equinox**: The Spring Equinox (also called Festival of Trees, Alban Eilir, Ostara, & Rites of Eostre) is a fertility rite celebrating the birth of Spring and the reawakening of life from the Earth. Origin of many of the secular traditions of Christian holiday of Easter. **Spring Harvest Festival**: Celebrated in ancient Egypt along banks of the River Nile in honor of Mother-Goddess Isis. **Legba Zaou**: Ceremony honors Legba, loa of sun & guardian of gate between worlds, with sacrifice of a black goat.	21 **Naw Ruz:** Baha'i observance of the vernal equinox symbolizing spiritual growth and renewal **Shubun-sai:** Shinto vernal equinox observance.	22 **Festival of Minerva:** Two day Roman festival honoured the Goddess Minerva. Offerings of geraniums and tiger lilies were made at her temples to increase creativity. **Procession of the Tree-Bearers**: On this date in Rome, uprooted pine trees are carried through the streets of the city and taken to Attis' sacred temple as part of an annual ritual to mourn the God's demise.
23 **Summer Finding**: Norse celebration of day when light of the sun is more powerful than the darkness. **Dance of the Salii**: Gods Mars & Saturn invoked annually in ancient Rome, by priests dancing while brandishing spears and clashing holy shields. Evil spirits of Winter were expelled from city, & growth of crops stimulated through magic.	24 **Palm/Passion Sunday**: Christian celebration of the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. Day begins Holy Week. Observed by worship celebrations & parades using palm branches. **Ashura**: An Islamic optional single day fast recognizing the Creation, Noah's departure from the ark, and the saving of Moses from Pharaoh.	25 **Annunciation of the Lord**: Feast in honor of angel Gabriel's appearance to Mary in order to tell her of Jesus' coming birth. **Hilaria**: Festival of Joy in honour of the God Attis & Cybele celebrated annually in the Roman tradition. A joyous event, which commemorates the triumph of day over night after the Vernal Equinox. Festivities were brought to a close with ceremony of washing believed to promote fertility.	26	27 **Smell the Breeze Day:** This is a popular day in Egypt to take time off work and have an outing or picnic. It's a day to relax & have fun. **Liberalia**: This festival was celebrated in ancient Rome in honor of the wine-God Liber-Pater. It was a time of drinking and feasting, and a day when young men entered their manhood.	28 **Holi:** Hindu spring festival dedicated to god of pleasure. It is observed in a colorful and boisterous manner. People shower and smear each other with colored water and red & green powder. **Pesach (Passover):** Jewish 8-day celebration of deliverance of the Jews from slavery in Egypt. The story of the Exodus is recounted, and the ongoing struggle of all peoples for freedom from internal and external tyranny is celebrated.	29 **Good Friday:** Christian remembrance of the crucifixion of Jesus and related events. **The Delphinia**: Celebration at Delphi in Phocis, where Apollo gave his oracles. This involved several competitions, probably subdivided into musical styles such as hymns and lyric poetry, which were the favorite of Apollo.
30 **Iranian New Year**: Celebration begins on this date for 13 days.	31 **Feast of Luna**: Feast celebrated annually at moonrise in honour of beautiful & powerful Goddess of the Moon. Time for lunar magick in the Roman tradition.					